

DIRECTOR'S NOTE – CRAIG DIXON

Welcome to Wagga Wagga School of Arts Community Theatre's production of *The Merry Widows!*

A charming and witty play that combines humour, drama, and a touch of mystery, Ceanarth Fox's heartfelt script is filled with loveable characters, witty dialogue, and a secret to keep the audience guessing until the end.

After reading the script for the first time it became apparent that the show would rise and fall on the performers and their ability to bring the characters to life. With this in mind, it was with tremendous satisfaction that I was able to assemble a cast involving some of my favourite local performers, including Jo Darby, Bec Huxtable, Marg Davies, Lynden Clark, as well as exciting newcomer Claire Cheshire.

A special thank you also goes out to Lily Crocker who eagerly stepped in during the rehearsal process as an understudy.

As a first-time director I always knew that I would be heavily relying upon the production team to have my back, particularly where my beginner's enthusiasm ran the risk of struggling to make up for my relative inexperience.

In this regard I have been fortunate to have the steadfast support of Fay Walters as production manager, as well as Robyn Horwell in costume, Deri Hadler in tech, David Font as our sound effects expert, and Pam Buchanan running the ship backstage. Special mention also must be made of School of Arts president and Wagga buy-swap-and-sell enthusiast Lee Kennedy, who helped source more than half the set, as well as Julian Smith who helped put it together.

Working on this production has been a collaborative and enriching experience. Naturally as with any community endeavour there are too many people who kindly donated their skills and expertise to mention individually, however my thanks goes to all who helped assist this production in any way.

After several enjoyable months we believe we have something special for you today. We hope you enjoy the show!

Warm regards,

Craig

PRESIDENTS WELCOME – LEE KENNEDY

It is with great pleasure that the School of Arts present for you *The Merry Widows*. Again many hours of work from the cast, director, crew, (which includes production manager, stage manager and costume coordinator), lighting and sound personnel. It is a wonderful script and the actors have been working diligently on bringing to the theatre their characters all of whom are so different. We welcome Claire Cheshire and hope she has enjoyed the process and her first performance on the basement stage.

Congratulations to Craig Dixon, who has put a lot of time and effort into directing his first full length play.

Hopefully the first of many.

Thank you all.

Lee Kennedy

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THE MERRY WIDOWS
BY CENARTH FOX DIRECTED BY CRAIG DIXON



Claire Cheshire

Claire Cheshire is thrilled to be making her SoACT debut in *The Merry Widows*, having recently moved to Wagga from the UK. Her love of the stage was sparked at an early age with highlights including; portraying Juliet in Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* and Sandy in *Grease*. Over the last ten years, Claire has enjoyed writing, choreographing and directing numerous school productions in her role as a teacher. When not on stage, she loves having adventures with her family and running baby and toddler classes. She would like to thank SoACT for this opportunity and her family and friends in Australia and the UK for their unwavering love and support.



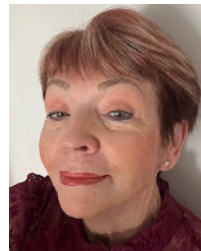
Lynden Clark

Lynden has been treading the boards with SoACT for the past eighteen years and is very happy to be playing Ruby in *The Merry Widows*. It has been fun to play an eccentric character like Ruby while acknowledging the infinite sadness of losing a life long partner. The warmth and sincerity of those close female friendships should never be underestimated.



Jo Darby

Jo is a seasoned, award-winning actress with more than 30 years on stage. After a three year hiatus, she is enjoying her return to the stage this season and is excited to tread the boards again, alongside this talented cast.



Marg Davies

Very happy to be part of this wonderful play with five brave women displaying their everyday life struggles. It is a tribute to the writer who has enabled them expression in this very authentic way. Thanks to our director, Craig, for allowing me to play such a wonderful character as Joan.



Rebecca Huxtable

Bec grew up in Newcastle performing in and writing plays with 2 til 5 Theatre Group. After four babies and a career in the NSWPF she joined SOACT and has performed in *Absolutely Fabulous* and *And Then There Were None* as well as several *Ten x 10s* plays and February *FunDays*. Bec is excited to play the bubbly and inappropriate Siobhan with a cast of amazing actresses.



Craig Dixon - Director

Craig loves theatre for the escapism it provides. He first auditioned for a School of Arts production on an impulse several years ago and had so much fun he has continued to be involved with the organisation both onstage and behind the scenes ever since. After directing a couple of one-act plays as well as a variety of ten-minute shows, he was delighted to be offered the opportunity to take on a two-act production with *The Merry Widows*. Won over by the scripts mix of good humour, loveable characters, and intriguing mystery, he has enjoyed the experience immensely and is grateful to the cast, crew, and the School of Arts for the opportunity to be involved.

harry mangelsdorf & amanda tilyard

ONE AGENCY

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PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager - Pam Buchanan
Props and Set - Pam Buchanan
Director - Craig Dixon
Sound Design - David Font

Lighting Design - Deri Hadler
Front of House Coordinator - Donna O'Grady
Production Manager - Fay Walters
Lighting Operator - Fernando Wittaker - Roa

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SPECIAL THANKS

A million thanks to the following people:

Paul Cocks, Lily Crocker, Phil Horwell, Ken Kennedy, Harry Nixon & Julian Smith

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